No. 8

The
REDEMPTION
of
Marie Gordon
THE TRAGIC STORY OF
WRONGED WOMANHOOD
Price 10¢

"I'll meet you anywhere!" Burley screamed. "And I'll fight you with your own weapons. I am glad we have come to the parting of the ways. There is not room enough for both of us on this earth."

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AND DON'T fail to let me know where you land. I'll take a hold of your case and hurry it along as fast as I can," the old lawyer went on. "Of course, it may take a month, perhaps two. You must be patient, and I assure you that I will spare no effort to get the children awarded to you when the case comes up for trial."

Marie rose and held out her hand. Her eyes, as they met his, were tearfully brilliant.

"You have lifted a tremendous weight from my heart, dear Mr. Shields," she said, her lips quivering. "I feel ever so much better since I talked with you about my troubles. I am deeply grateful."

The attorney smiled.

"I want you to feel better, but not particularly grateful," he answered, taking both of her hands in his. "Before your father passed away, I was under a great obligation to him. I will discharge it now by serving his daughter faithfully and well."

Mrs. Gordon took her departure in better spirits.

It was only when the four walls of the hotel room stared at her, that her heart began to ache anew.

The ceaseless longing for her babies could not be assuaged. And then, in a determined effort to force her thoughts into a different channel, she started her search for a position as governess in a private family.

One morning, a few days later, as she perused the Chicago Daily News, she came across the following lines in the column of classified help wanted:

"Young woman of culture and refinement can find a good home in private family. Must be fond of children. Liberal salary and congenial sur-

roundings. Apply in person at once.

Mrs. A. C. Boswell,

Gary, Indiana."

"Oh, this must be just what I am looking for," Marie murmured as she leaned back in her chair. "I have heard of the Boswells. Mr. Boswell is the president of some big steel corporation."

The next moment she had Mr. Shields on the phone. There was unmistakable gladness in her voice.

"Do so and let me know the result, Mrs. Gordon," came back. "Luck to you."

"I am going out there to-day," replied Marie. The lawyer told her not to waste any time in applying for the position.

"Thanks," she cried, and hung up the receiver.

Marie at once made preparations for a quick trip to Gary. She discarded her expensive clothing and garbed herself in a plain dress. The change did not detract from her great beauty. If anything, it made her look younger and more girlish.

A taxi took her to her destination. She told the driver to stop some distance from the palatial residence of the Boswells.

She was playing the part of a servant applying for a position, and servants don't travel in taxis as a rule. There was a pleasant surprise in store for her. The Boswell house reminded her of her own home, Oak Manor.

It was a lovely place with spacious flower gardens, tall trees and lawns. As she approached the front entrance, she met a hard-faced, elderly woman who gave

her a sour look in passing.

"A disappointed applicant," was her mental observation, and it was true.

Marie was admitted by a kindly old butler.

"You wish to see Mrs. Boswell?" he inquired, with a genial smile.

"I do," she smiled in return. "I am an applicant for the position advertised in the Chicago Daily News. I hope I am not too late."

"I hope so too," the butler said devoutly, and instantly gained Marie's friendship. "Just have a seat for a few moments."

Scarcely a minute passed when he returned smiling in a congenial manner.

"Mrs. Boswell will see you," he announced.

As Marie was conducted to a richly furnished library, she did some swift thinking. She decided to assume her maiden name, Marie Carey, in order to obviate painful explanations.

The mistress of the house was seated at a desk. She was perhaps Marie's age, and if not decidedly good-looking, she had attractive features and a pair of frank, engaging eyes.

Her manner was cordial and her poise graceful. All in all she might be called a very charming woman.

"Please have a seat," she said with a winning smile as she indicated a chair. She scrutinized her visitor for a moment in silence. "I presume you came to apply for the position as governess."

"I did," Marie acknowledged, her voice low and pleasant.

"I have had so many tiresome and unsuitable young women to see me this morning that it is rather a relief to meet one who is not bristling with self-importance," Mrs. Boswell resumed. "You know, the servant

question is a most perplexing one. They all want big wages and little work."

A faint smile curved Marie's lips. She knew from experience. Then she dropped her eyes demurely and waited for Mrs. Boswell to speak again.

The latter asked numerous questions, all of which the lovely applicant answered without hesitation and with a most agreeable frankness. Marie admitted truthfully that she had experience with children.

Only she regretted that she was not able to furnish a written recommendation. As reference she gave Mr. Shields, the Chicago attorney.

"I am frank to say that I like your appearance and your manner of speech," Mrs. Boswell went on. "It is easy to see that you have the things most essential, namely, refinement and a pleasing personality. You had experience with children, and no doubt you are fond of them."

"Oh, I love them," Marie cried, almost betraying the mother in her.

Mrs. Boswell nodded her satisfaction.

"As a rule I require the best of recommendations," she declared, "but I shall not be so exacting in your case, Miss Carey. I feel disposed to give you a trial."

"I'll do my best to please you," Marie replied earnestly.

"I believe you will," the other woman smiled. "And now I will send for my little daughter Muriel. I want you to meet her before I definitely engage you."

A servant was summoned by touching a bell. Mrs. Boswell gave her instructions clearly, and a moment later a very pretty child about six years of age, bounced into the room.

She ran to her mother and put her arm about her neck in an affectionate manner.

"Muriel, this is Miss Carey," the mother said, indicating Marie. "She will probably be your new governess. Go and shake hands with her."

The little girl approached with a shy smile. Marie's eyes were misty. How much like her own baby. Ah, how her mother heart beat with yearning. She opened her arm and Muriel dashed into them.

"I—I like you," the child murmured, and held up her lips to be kissed.

"And I like you very, very much," Marie responded softly as she forced back the tears.

Mrs. Boswell's final decision was made that moment. Never before had Muriel shown the least degree of affection toward a total stranger. The scene she beheld now verified her sound judgment in human nature. She was convinced that Marie Carey loved children.

And she was also convinced that she could safely trust her treasure into the hands of this, the last applicant for the position of governess.

So far as Marie Gordon was concerned, she felt quite elated over her success of finding a position so quickly, and one which suited her so well. There was not the least doubt in her mind but that she and Mrs. Boswell would get along splendidly together.

The bright spot in the entire situation, was, of course, little Muriel. It would give the unhappy mother the much needed opportunity of lavishing her affection on a child, though not her own.

While the child listened in silence, the question of salary was settled between her mother and the woman who was to be her governess and constant companion.

She evinced unmistakable joy, clapped her hands and kissed Marie again.

"Now, I would like to have you come as quickly

as you can," Mrs. Boswell said as she rose. "This little girl of mine needs you to hold her in check. And I dare say," she added with a smile, "you'll have your hands full with her."

Marie uttered a soft laugh.

"Muriel and I are going to be regular pals. Aren't we, dear?" The question was directed at the child, who beamed upon the speaker. "Indeed, we are," she cried happily.

That ended the interview. In parting Marie promised to take a hold of the position as governess the following day. She returned to Chicago and at once made the necessary preparations.

The activities were welcomed by the unhappy woman. Her mind was no longer given over to brooding about her great misfortune.

Thoughts of a different nature made her forget to some extent, for a time at least, the tragedy which had come into her life. A spirit of new hope took possession of her. The future she placed into the hands of the mighty Dominator of all human destinies.

Chapter 28

THE RIVALS

BETTY HARDING was progressing rapidly in her chosen profession. At the urgent request of Burley, the tutor, she quit her position at the Haddon department store. He held that it was imperative that she devote her entire time to the development of her art. She took with her the jeers and jibes of Massey, the floorman, whose keen disappointment was thus expressed.

But there was also another man who deplored Betty's sudden leaving. This man was a member of the firm, who as employment manager had given her the first chance.

That both of these men harbored sinister designs upon her, Betty knew very well. They had shown her marked attention and favors not accorded other saleswomen lacking in good looks.

There had been much subtle persuasion, extravagant promises and veiled threats when nothing else availed.

Of the two Betty feared Massey most. She had never forgotten that day, when furiously jealous, the floorman intimated that something unpleasant would happen to her if she insisted upon slighting him.

And so Betty escaped a possible calamity only to rush headlong into a sure one.

At Burley's studio she found herself face to face with a situation far more menacing than the one she escaped at Haddon's. The artist no longer made an attempt to hide the fact that he was desperately in love

with her.

Carlton McLain, the famous novelist and a daily visitor at the studio, left no doubt as to his growing affection.

Betty liked both men. They showed her all the little attentions so dear to a woman's heart. They openly competed for her smiles. When one took her to lunch at noon, the other insisted upon taking her to dinner that night. Sometimes all three went to a show.

It was a most peculiar fact that Betty felt quite safe with either of them alone. She seemed to have forgotten Burley's excuse about his sister being at the bedside of a sick aunt.

And when, as the weeks passed by, that sister failed to return, she did not take the trouble to make further inquiries. She felt quite capable of taking care of herself without a chaperon.

Poor Betty had been coaxed by the assidious Waterford Burley into believing that she had a wonderful future before her as an artist, as a painter of pastoral scenes.

And it must indeed have seemed that way to her, for two of her paintings sold at fancy prices. Burley had disposed of them to personal friends of his. At least that is what he told Betty, and she saw no reason to doubt it.

However, the lovely young Mrs. Harding had allowed herself to be duped.

She had been cajoled into believing that she was a real artist, which deprived her of the faculty required to judge her work strictly on its merits. As a matter of fact her efforts were crude and infantile.

And Betty would have been bitterly disappointed and horrified, had she stumbled across Burley's method of disposing of her pictures.

They were consigned to the dump under the cover of darkness, and Burley, with a deliberate lie on his lips, paid the money out of his own pocket. But no man will sacrifice hundreds of dollars merely to please a beautiful young creature like Betty Harding was. There was a very definite method in the artist's madness.

He loved the girl. There could not be any doubt about that. At the very beginning of their friendship he found her irresistible in her strange, fascinating youthful loveliness.

He discovered it in a certain charm which swept him off his feet.

But Waterford Burley was not the man to put his head in the marital yoke. Besides, Betty already had a husband. He wanted her more than anything else on earth.

He was absolutely sure that he would be able to win her over to his own warped way of thinking. Already she had granted him many privileges. She no longer flinched when he took little liberties with her. She no longer objected when he kissed her occasionally.

And he took pains to make her believe that this was merely a brotherly affection.

Then Carlton McLain intruded himself upon the scene. The famous novelist made no denial of the fact that he, too, loved the beautiful Betty, and that he meant to bid for her affection and favors precisely with the same coin used by Burley.

When Betty realized that both of these men were in love with her, she made the mistake of playing up to one and then the other.

"I have begun a new story," the novelist told her one day as they were alone." And you will be surprised when I tell you that you inspired it, Betty. I have chosen you as the heroine, and if you don't object I shall dedi-

cate that story to my dear friend, Betty Harding."

She blushed prettily and smiled.

"Why should I object?" she said. "I am sure I feel flattered that a writer of international reputation should want to dedicate a novel to a poor nobody like me."

"You must not call yourself that, my dear," he objected, patting her soft cheek. "You don't know how wonderful you are. And don't be surprised if one of these days I steal you away from Burley. I think you can do better things than bury yourself in a stuffy studio."

Betty glanced at him, a question in her violet eyes.

"But I enjoy painting," she declared. "And I am afraid there isn't anything else I could do to make a comfortable and an honest living."

"Oh, yes, there is," McLain disagreed emphatically. "I know there is. and so does Burley, only he is too selfish to admit it for fear of losing you. Did you ever think about trying for the movies?"

"Never," she admitted. "I can't act."

"Neither can Mae Murray, Katherine McDonald and a lot of others, but their salaries run into hundreds of thousands a year," said the novelist. "They are cashing in on their looks. You are better looking by far than any of these.

"I'll wager any amount that you'd catch on quickly enough if you had someone behind you with a little influence. So far as I can see there is no reason in the world why you should not make a try for the movies. Try it once at least."

Betty Harding had been staring at the speaker with constantly growing amazement. The prospect held out to her was glorious.

Betty had escaped a possible calamity only to rush headlong into a sure one. At Burley's studio she found herself face to face with a situation far more menacing.

She shook her head with a sad, wistful smile.

"Even if all you say were true, dear friend," she murmured, "I am not fortunate enough to have anyone whose influence would carry weight with some of the big film directors or producers. Besides, I am merely a——"

"There is where you are wrong," McLain broke in with enthusiasm. "I am personally acquainted with Cecile De Mille, Sam Goldwin, Mack Sennett and a number of others of no lesser importance in the film industry. De Mille is a close friend of mine.

"There is not the least doubt in my mind but that I can land a contract for you if you'll give me permission to intercede for you. And if you give me permission, I'll assure you that I will see you through to the top."

While Betty's lovely features were flushed with pleasure, and her eyes sparkled with anticipation, she nevertheless shook her head.

"It is most kind of you to interest yourself in me to that extent, but I could not leave dear Watty," she said, a touch of sadness in her voice. "You don't realize all he has done for me. Indeed, I owe him more than I can ever repay."

McLain's brow clouded for a moment. His disappointment was only too evident.

"You are under no particular obligations to him, Betty," he answered somewhat testily. "You paid for your tuition by posing for him, didn't you? That makes you even. Of course, I don't want to urge you into doing anything distasteful. Without wishing to flatter you, I say that you have the rare potential beauty ideally suited for the screen.

"Now let us not speak about that any longer. But give the matter a little thought, and remember, I am always ready and anxious to help you." McLain paused.

then added earnestly: "Really, Betty, there is not a thing in the world I wouldn't do gladly for you."

This conversation lingered with Betty for many days to come.

She decided not to discuss the matter with Burley, fearing he might misconstrue McLain's interest in her.

In the meantime the silent rivalry between these two men continued to grow until it finally reached an acute stage.

They were friends in the presence of Betty and bitter enemies at heart. While they chatted pleasantly, their eyes seemed to say:

"You keep your hands off. She belongs to me."

The climax came one afternoon when Betty had gone out to do some shopping.

McLain and Burley were seated in the latter's studio smoking. For some time there had been silence between them, and they were eyeing each other very suspiciously.

"What's on your mind?" the novelist asked suddenly.

"What's on yours?" the artist countered.

"Do you want to know?" the other asked with some sarcasm.

"Yes," came back quickly.

"Well," began McLain in a slow drawl. "I was just wondering how long this thing is to go on. No use beating about the bush. We both love Betty and neither would marry her if she were free. That's true, isn't it? If you are candid you must admit——"

"I think," interrupted Burley, his voice cold and grating. "I think you are speaking for yourself when you say that."

McLain laughed harshly.

"At least, I am frank enough to admit the truth,

old man. That is more than you seem willing to do."

The artist shifted in his seat, threw away the stub of his cigarette, and lit another. For fully a minute he measured his friend with cool, calculating glance.

"Carlton," he began at length, "you and I have been friends for a long time. I have always respected your rights and never questioned the motive for anything you did. I am willing to admit that we are both rotters where women are concerned. But I never interfered when you——"

"Hold on," the novelist cried, leaning forward. "How about that little black-eyed Italian girl? She liked me well enough and was satisfied until you came along and turned her head with your damnable flattery. You persuaded her to pose for you, and that was the end of me so far as she was concerned. I never complained. I was a good loser.

"But how did you treat her after the poor kid found herself in trouble? You packed her off with a paltry few hundred dollars and made her swear to keep her mouth shut as to the author of her predicament. Do you know what would happen if her father knew that you are the guilty one? Those Italians have a nasty way of wielding a stiletto."

Burley turned pale and evinced signs of extreme uneasiness. He pulled himself together with an effort.

Chapter 29

A TRAGEDY

WHEN A MAN breaks a moral law, although he may escape punishment, he carries within that silent accuser — his conscience. Waterford Burley had done worse than break a moral law. He had broken the promise he made to an innocent girl. And when he betrayed her he became also indirectly the murderer of a tiny human being whose father he was. It was not pleasant to be reminded of this. He glared at McLain.

"Was it necessary to refer to that?" he asked, a slight quiver in his voice.

"Not just necessary," McLain retorted. "But it is timely. And a timely reminder might save you a lot of trouble."

The artist whirled upon the speaker.

"Are you threatening me?" he demanded hotly.

"Oh, not at all, old man," came back. "I may warn a man, but I never threaten. It is so foolish unless one is prepared to make good." He grinned sardonically as he added: "I would really hate to see you the victim of a stiletto. However, I could never understand why you did not play fair with that pretty Italian girl."

"I don't care to discuss that," Burley growled.

"Of course, you don't," the other laughed unpleasantly. "But it is not becoming to you to deprive me of having a place in Betty's calculation. You can't dismiss me as you would a servant."

"Alright, I won't," Burley decided suddenly. "And now the thing to be done is this: we must find out which

one of us she cares for. Everything depends upon that."

"Yes," agreed McLain. "We can't go on as we have been doing. Another month of this would drive me insane."

"Another month?" flashed the artist. "Not another minute. I know how you feel. But you can't imagine how I feel about this thing. I have wanted to kill you several times. I have——"

"What?"

"I have," insisted Burley in his reckless fury. "That girl has gotten in my blood. I love her so that I would rather give up anything else. And I mean to have her."

McLain appeared to be less impetuous than his rival. But his was the nature that never yields when a decision is once made.

Burley could not love the girl like he did. It was not possible. He felt that he had first claim on Betty because he was first to meet her. And Burley had not played fair with him.

He had gone to the Haddon department store to search for the girl immediately after he told him about her wonderful beauty and strange charm.

However, McLain gave these things no consideration now. What was the use of discussing them? The question to be settled now was the sole possession of Betty. Both could not have her.

"I was a fool to permit you to frequent my studio the way you have been doing," the artist went on bitterly. "You took advantage of every opportunity to be alone with her. But," his voice rose threateningly, "there will be an end to that now. You'll stay away—you must."

"Is that so?" the novelist sneered. "Thanks for that invitation. But let me tell you something, old man. I'll not give up Betty to you. I'll fight for her with every

weapon at my command."

Burley had risen. McLain's open defiance maddened him.

"Don't you think you had better be going?" he cried, assuming a menacing attitude. "If you don't——"

"You are a brave man," McLain said with a dark scowl. "You wouldn't dare to talk to me like that if we were on neutral grounds."

"I'll meet you anywhere!" Burley screamed. "And I'll fight you with your own weapon. I am glad we have come to the parting of the ways. There is not room enough for both of us on this earth. One of us will have to go, either you or I."

"Agreed," the novelist replied with surprising coolness. "Let the one who survives take Betty."

Burley turned abruptly away and walked to the other end of the studio. Before he wheeled around he heard the door slam and knew that his enemy had gone. Then he went into the adjoining room and procured an automatic gun. He inspected it thoroughly to make sure that the chamber was loaded.

"Well, I am ready for you, McLain," he hissed through his clenched teeth, and shoved the weapon in his pocket.

As a rule, when Betty went on a shopping tour in the afternoon, she did not return to the studio until the following morning. But upon this occasion, for some unknown reason, she came in just as Burley was about to leave.

"Oh, I did not expect you back to-day," he said in a strained voice.

"No?" She looked at him sharply. His face was pale and drawn, and his eyes refused to meet hers. "What is the matter, Watty?"

"Nothing at all." He tried to smile.

"Yes, there is," she insisted. "And you must tell me." After a pause she added: "Have you and McLain quarreled?"

Burley nodded and turned away.

Betty was at his side in an instant and made him face her. As she swung him around she came in contact with a hard object in his outside coat pocket. Intuition told her what it was.

"Give me that gun," she demanded.

He obeyed meekly.

"And now I want to know what it is all about." Betty made him sit down and stood over him. "No fibs, now, Watty. I want to know the truth. Was it about me?"

"It was," he admitted hoarsely. "And McLain threatened to get me."

"That is why you were going out with that gun in your pocket, weren't you? Oh, Watty, why do you men want to be so foolish about a woman, and a married woman at that?" Betty placed a hand on his shoulder.

"Can't you realize that I can mean nothing to either of you? We have been such splendid pals, and now you have spoiled it all by quarreling. Oh, I am so sorry. You and Mr. McLain must make up and—and." She could go no further.

Ready tears sprang to her eyes and she brushed them hastily away. The artist saw it.

"Don't," he begged, reaching for her hand. "I can't stand it. You—you can't know how dearly I love you, Betty. I just can't help it. You have never told me why you are forced to work for a living when you have a husband. But I know this: he doesn't deserve a jewel like you."

"Hush!" She drew away from him. "You don't understand, and some day I am going to tell you."

She walked over to the table upon which she had deposited a neatly wrapped package. Picking up a keen-edged paper knife, she cut the cord, then stuck the knife in her hair.

"I want to show you what I bought," she said, anxious to change the subject. "I saw the prettiest scarf in one of the shop windows. I hope you like it. Isn't it beautifully blue?" Betty flung the scarf across her shoulders and faced the artist.

"It matches your eyes," he commented. "So it must be beautiful."

Just then the telephone rang. Burley jumped up to answer the call. He took the receiver off the hook and waited. For a moment he stood transfixed. The voice at the other end had given him a shock.

"Yes, this is Mr. Burley," he answered with forced calmness. "And I'll be home this evening."

"Who was it?" Betty asked when she saw him tremble as he hung up the receiver.

"Someone who says he must see me to-night," the artist replied. "I don't know the party, but the voice sounded familiar."

"It wasn't Carlton McLain, was it?" she queried.

"No, not him," came back gruffly.

"Well, then I better be going." Betty rewrapped her package slowly. Then she idled about the room, occasionally casting a furtive glance at her friend.

Her heart was filled with strange misgivings. A feeling of dread stole over her. "No, I won't go right now," she decided aloud. "I'll stay until your visitor has been here, and you can take me home."

Burley nodded his assent. He lit a cigarette while Betty went into an adjoining room, closing the door behind her.

Suddenly she was startled by the sound of an an-

gry voice. She could not understand what was being said, but the speaker spoke with a foreign accent, Italian, she thought.

Then she heard Burley cry out. This was followed by the dull thud of an inert body striking the floor.

Betty ran back into the studio to find the artist lying in his blood. His eyes gave a sign of recognition, then turned glassy.

"My God—Watty—Watty!" she screamed, as she stooped over him. "Who has done this?"

In stooping over the paper knife slipped out of her hair and dropped to the floor beside the silent form of Waterford Burley. Betty was too excited to notice this.

"Help—help!" she shrieked, running to the door and flinging it open.

Tenants from other parts of the building rushed in. Behind them loomed the tall figure of a policeman. Betty was kneeling at the side of the mortally wounded artist, weeping hysterically.

"Watty—Watty," she sobbed. "I am so sorry this had to happen."

The police officer, a keen-eyed individual, took the situation in at a glance.

There was a tiny hole in the prostrate man's shirt front, through which the blood oozed steadily. A paper knife, a dangerous weapon, lay on the floor within a few feet.

He had heard the woman exclaim that she was sorry this had to happen. And judging by appearances, he concluded that she had committed the deed.

It did not require an experienced eye to see that Burley was beyond all human aid. The weapon used had penetrated his heart, and he was quite dead. Those were facts—horrible facts.

"Get a doctor, quick!" cried Betty. "He must not

die!"

"A doctor can't help him, young woman," the policeman said. "That poor fellow is done for, and I guess I'll have to arrest you."

"Arrest me?" Betty stared at the officer wild-eyed. "Merciful God, you don't mean that I——" Her voice trailed off into incoherent mutterings, and she fell to the floor in a dead faint.

Chapter 30

AN EXPLOSION

THE COMING of the governess to the Boswell home proved to be somewhat of an event. Marie Carey, as she chose to call herself now, met with a reception probably never accorded a paid servant. This was due solely to the very favorable impression she made when she came to apply for the position of governess.

Naturally of a sweet disposition, Marie's personal charm was almost irresistible. It was easy for her to make others think well of her.

Even her own sex admitted her superior qualities as a woman, which is unusual. Many men worshipped at the shrine of her chaste beauty, and all children loved her.

Little Muriel Boswell had spread the most fanciful stories among the servants about the wonderful governess engaged for her. Much to her mother's amusement she went into childish raptures about "Miss Carey."

The mother made no attempt to curb the child's enthusiasm. She herself had been deeply impressed with Marie's charming personality and obvious refinement.

She felt quite sure that this new governeses would be an ideal companion and tutor for her little girl, and also prove a most pleasing addition to the household.

Even Mr. Boswell, the multi-millionaire Steel King, and ideal representative type of the modern money machine made of flesh and blood, found himself looking forward to the coming of the new governess with more

While he demeaned himself like a perfect gentleman, the strange look in his eyes, when they rested upon Marie, betrayed his thoughts and the turmoil in his heart.

than mere curious expectation.

Judging by his wife's description of her, this Marie Carey must be an extraordinary woman. She must be beautiful in person as well as in character—something not often found these days.

The first day at the Boswell mansion was one that Marie would never forget. She was introduced to every member of the household with Muriel hanging on her arm. Mr. Boswell held her slim white hand a little longer than the occasion seemed to warrant.

When she raised her eyes to his, a faint flush crept into her soft cheeks. A feeling akin to fear took possession of her.

"I have heard so much about you, Miss Carey, that I do not regard you as an entire stranger," he said smiling his approval. "I trust you will like it here with us."

Marie gave him one of her wonderful smiles in return.

"I know I will," she replied, withdrawing her hand from his clasp.

To all appearances the position she assumed was an undisguised blessing. Her sorely troubled heart now found solace in the many kindnesses heaped upon her.

Little Muriel Boswell, a lovable child, at least to some extent, filled the gap made by the temporary absence from her own children.

And so Marie entered upon her new duties with characteristic energy and devotion.

Her distinguished appearance, gentle bearing and great kindness won her the good will and admiration of all who came in contract with her. And she played the part of a paid servant with consummate tact.

Never for a moment did she forget her position.

Within a week Marie made herself so well liked that Mrs. Boswell began to treat her as an equal rather

than a servant.

She also wrought a change in the habits of Mr. Boswell, the Steel King. He came home to dinner quite regularly instead of going to the club. He never missed an opportunity to say a few nice things to the beautiful young governess.

While he demeaned himself like a perfect gentleman, the strange look in his eyes when they rested upon Marie, betrayed his hidden thoughts and the turmoil in his heart.

Quite frequently he found himself comparing the governess with his wife, much to the discredit of the latter.

"By God, she is a stunner," was his usual mental comment. "What a shame that she has to work for a living."

Boswell was not the only man who had thus expreseed himself about Marie. Scores of others had cast longing and amorous glances at her, only to meet with a rebuff.

The Steel King of Gary bore a spotless reputation. Since his marriage there was but one woman in his life. His great wealth and influence had thrown designing females across his path—yes, quite a few of them. But not a single one of them succeeded in corrupting his morals.

He was a man of strength and virility. He admired beautiful women perhaps more than some others, but he never forgot himself to the extent of encouraging a fair charmer.

But he had never met a woman like Marie Carey. There was something about her — some provocative charm, which caused his mind to swerve into the forbidden channel.

The atmosphere of mystery with which she sur-

rounded herself, aroused in him a feeling far beyond mere interest.

Mrs. Boswell never had a reason to mistrust her husband. Knowing him as she did, she laughed when some of her friends warned her against the lovely young governess.

"You better keep an eye on her," one, whose marriage had been a failure, told Mrs. Boswell one afternoon as they were sipping tea. "This new governess of yours is too demure and modest to be true. I have seen her type before. I tell you she is dangerous."

The only answer Mrs. Boswell made to this was: "I am not a bit worried, my dear."

Just the same she had to admit that her husband never overlooked an opportunity to speak to Miss Carey. Once the latter had blushed violently at something Boswell said to her in an undertone.

One evening after dinner, they were seated on the spacious veranda. The governess and little Muriel were romping on the lawn below.

While they were discussing the latest society doings, Mrs. Boswell was conscious that her husband's gaze rested frequently upon Marie.

"What do you think of her, Albert?" she asked suddenly.

Mr. Boswell grinned like a schoolboy caught in the act of some mischief.

"Miss Carey has a wonderful personality." he answered slowly. "And I am sure she comes from a good family. You were fortunate in getting her, my dear."

"Yes, I agree with you," Mrs. Boswell said with a smile. "I only hope we will be able to keep her. Our little daughter is just wild about her. Sometimes I find myself wondering what induced Miss Carey to apply for the position of governess. And as I said before, I hope

we will be able to keep her."

"Why not?" the husband queried. "If it should become a question of money, you can go as far as you like. She is worth almost any price. She'll make a lady of that little hoyden of ours."

"I don't think money alone could hold her," Mrs. Boswell remarked, "Miss Carey has seen trouble. Someone hast hurt her terribly. Sympathy and kind treatment will do more than——"

"What makes you think she's had trouble?" he broke in, leaning forward and gazing at his wife intently.

"Several times I came upon her unawares, and there were tears in her eyes," the latter declared. "It was pitiful the way she tried to hide them. Another thing, she is passionately fond of children. I am almost tempted to believe that Marie was once a mother."

Mr. Boswell was smoking rapidly. A slight frown crossed his brow.

"Miss Carey had satisfactory recommendations when you engaged her, didn't she?" he inquired. "I am sure you wouldn't take a chance——"

"She gave Mr. Shields of Chicago as reference," Mrs. Boswell interrupted quicky. "You know him, Albert. He is one of the best corporation lawyers. I wrote to him for information and he replied in the most glowing terms."

"Well," said the master of the house, "I'll see Mr. Shields in a few days. I am really anxious to know a little more about Muriel's governess, I frankly confess, she is somewhat of a mystery to me."

The subject under discussion was dropped at this point because Muriel came dashing upon the veranda, with her governess in pursuit.

"Be careful, dear," the mother cried as the child stumbled. "You'll fall."

But little Muriel was so intent upon outdistancing her governess that she paid no attention to her mother's warning. Neither did she see the big collie dog that lay directly in her path.

She had made a circuit of the veranda and was headed back to the stone steps which led to the lawn below.

As she stumbled over the dog she was pitched into space. If she struck the hard pavement below, she was sure to sustain a serious injury. She might crush her head or break her neck.

Neither her father nor her mother was able to prevent what seemed certain calamity. The latter screamed.

With an almost incredible burst of speed the governess dashed forward. How it happened she was never able to explain afterward.

Perhaps it was just luck. Perhaps it was amazing skill. She caught the girl as she was catapulted through the air, halfway down the steps.

Marie was holding the child to her breast and was kissing her laughing face. She looked pale as a sheet and her voice was husky with tears as she said:

"Oh, what a fright you gave me, you little darling."

It was the impulsive cry of a mother who sees her loved one in peril. Mrs. Boswell, having regained her usual calmness quickly, gave her husband a meaning look which said:

"I am more convinced than ever that this woman had a child of her own and lost it."

Mr. Boswell nodded, and the incident was apparently forgotten when Marie carried the girl into the house.

The following afternoon Mrs. Boswell had occa-

sion to visit her husband's office at the steel mills. Little Muriel insisted upon going along, and she wanted her governess to come, too.

"Did you ever see a steel mill in operation?" Mrs. Boswell asked Marie as they drove away in the family limousine.

"No, I haven't," answered Marie. "I imagine it must be very interesting."

"Indeed it is," her mistress exclaimed. "I went through the plant once, but it is not an altogether pleasing sight to see half-naked, perspiring men pour hot liquid steel into immense molds. If you care to make the trip, I'll have someone take you through."

"I would love it," said the governess.

Mr. Boswell received the visitors in a most pleasant manner. When his wife told him that Muriel's governess would like to see the plant, he acquiesced at once. He sent for the works manager, giving the latter some instruction.

"I am going to drive to the store and get a few things for Muriel," Mrs. Boswell announced. "We'll come back for Miss Carey in an hour or so."

As soon as the door closed behind her, Mr. Boswell turned to the works manager.

"I think I'll take Miss Carey through the plant myself," he said, smiling.

"Very well, sir," the other responded and took his departure.

Mr. Boswell, now alone with the beautiful governess, did not appear to be in a hurry to leave his private office. He sat at his desk and stared at Marie in a manner that made her feel somewhat uncomfortable.

"We have plenty of time, Miss Carey," he said in a low voice. "Sit down for a moment, won't you?"

She obeyed, obviously uneasy.

For a minute or two the Steel King remained silent. The picture of Marie seated on a chair only a few feet away seemed to hold him enthralled. She looked bewitchingly lovely with that faint flush in her soft cheeks and the expression of frightened expectation in her big eyes.

Finally he spoke.

"I came across a little article in the morning's paper which I would like you to read." He reached for the paper lying on his desk and unfolded it. "Perhaps I am mistaken, Miss Carey, but something tells me that it will interest you. Ah, here it is."

Marie glanced at the article pointed out to her. As she read the heading and the first few lines, her face went white.

"Philip Gordon, prominent Chicago business and club man sues wife for divorce. Jack Hoover named as correspondent," they said. "The beautiful Marie Gordon, who was Marie Carey before her marriage, is accused of having spent quite some time with Hoover at a Cincinnati hotel."

A moment of intense silence prevailed. The paper had dropped from Marie's nerveless hand.

"That—that is a base lie!" she managed to gasp finally. "I did not——"

"Ah, then you are Mrs. Gordon," the Steel King interrupted with a peculiar grin. "Well, I suspected it some time ago."

She met his protracted gaze without flinching.

"Do you believe that I——" she stopped, her lips aquiver.

"I don't know whether to believe it or not," Mr. Boswell remarked quietly. "As a rule newpapers do not print such things unless there is some turth in it. There is but one doubt in my mind, whether you are a fit——"

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